Seminar in the Challenges of Writing Science

Assignment 2: A paper on what constitutes science in your field.

The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop a sense of what communication channels are used in your chosen discipline. The assignment is based on Exercises 1-3 as described in the textbook on p. 36. You should go about the assignment as follows:

1. Write a one page description of your field (eg, human biology, horticulture, physics, organic chemistry). See p. 36 of the text for some guidelines on what this might include.

2. Spend some time (c half a day) with a member of your research community. Conduct an interview with that person (see p.37 of your text for guidance). I am happy for you to conduct the interview as a group, but you must write individual assignments. You may want to show me your interview questions so I can check that you are conducting an effective interview and covering all parts of the question.

3. Use your research above as the basis for a written profile of communication patterns in your research community. Include the names of the most important journals and databases, professional associations, funding agencies, and discussion lists. Explain why, how and with whom scientists in your field communicate. Include written, electronic and spoken forms of communication. What forms or genres of writing do scientists in your field employ (and why)? You should write no more than 3 pages in this, so you will need to be very concise in your writing.

Due date:
Marks: 15% of your final grade.